

critical digest

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The Weekly Newsletter Digest of the Current New York Theatre Scene

New York Openings This Week

The Deep Blue Sea-Morosco, 11/5/52. Alfred de Liagre, Jr. and John C. Wilson present Margaret Sullivan and Alan Webb in Terence Rattigan's new play. Staged by Frith Banbury. With James Hanley and Herbert Berghof...The Climate of Eden, Martin Beck, 11/6/52. Joseph M. Hyman and Bernard Hart present new play by Moss Hart adapted from "Shadows Move Among Them" a novel by Edgar Mittelholzer. John Cromwell, Isobel Elsom featured in cast directed by Moss Hart.

Digests of Current Reviews - more on back page

My Darlin' Aida-Winter Garden, 10/27/52. Three hundred thousand dollar Robert Joseph production of Charles Friedman's adaptation of Verdi classic opera is probably the most lavish Broadway show in years, all daily critics agreed. Lemuel Ayers' sets and costumes, Hassard Short's overall supervision of mammoth company, Franz Allers' orchestra and fine singing voices of Dorothy Sarnoff, Elaine Malbin, Howard Jarrett, William Wilderman and many others were rated perfect. Differences of opinion were over worthiness of Friedman's lyrics and transition of story from Egypt to Memphis, Tenn. Some deemed them outstanding, others considering them poor. News, Herald Tribune, Compass, Post, World Telegram & Sun, and Eagle critics okayed Friedman work, with slight reservations. Dissenters included Times, Mirror and Journal American reviewers; Atkinson, Times, commented that despite physical beauty of production and singing he had to admit that Verdi score brought out the worst in Friedman's literary style. Producers must kill thought that everything exotic can be happily translated to U.S. South. Coleman, Mirror, doubted if characters or music fit properly into their new locale. McClain, Journal American, termed production gargantuan, gorgeous and extremely grotesque. It only made him wonder why it was done. Chapman, News, and Hawkins, WT&S filed rave notices, praising highly each and every department. Kerr, Herald Tribune, didn't think much of lyrics or story, but recommended beautiful production. Pollock, Compass, felt quick, vivid production would have had more impact if Negro girl had been allowed to play title role. Watts, Post, enjoyed stage work of pictorial beauty and theatrical excitement, but didn't have many words of credit for male singers.

Dial M for Murder-Plymouth, 10/29/52. Unanimous "pros" greeted season's first mystery, ranging from raves to mild approval. Daily critics all enjoyed Frederick Knott new play presented by James Sherwood and cast headed by Maurice Evans, John Williams and Gusti Huber, and staged by Reginald Denham shared plaudits. Atkinson, Times, considered it the kind of suave make-believe actors would be willing to pay to appear in. Herald Tribune, News, Mirror appraisers agreed that sleek performances and direction covered any flaws in sometimes routine dialogue. Watts, Post, and McClain, Journal American, tabbed Williams star of evening. Post critic was glad to find he was wrong when he commented from London this summer that British hit was too complicated for U.S.fans. Shipley, New Leader, deemed it smartly handled routine sample of British thriller.

Follow-Up Reviews. Constance Carpenter, new lead of The King and I, is giving a credible, graceful and attractive performance, reports Hobe, Variety. Her appearance and characterization and her singing are pleasant and suitable if not outstanding. Yul Brynner seems lacking in charm, although his diction has improved, trade paper critic noted...Cloris Leachman, current South Pacific lead, is the most adroit in role since Mary Martin, praises Keating, Cue. George Britton's voice, leaves nothing to be desired.

' NYC THEATRE INDEX '

D - Daily W - Weekly M - Monthly B - Broadcast

DT - NY Times	DJC - Journal of Commerce	WCM - Chr Science Monitor
DH - NY Herald Tribune	DWJ - Wall Street Journal	WC - Commonweal
DN - NY News	DWW - Women's Wear	WCU - Cue
DM - NY Mirror	WB - Billboard	WN - Nation
DC - NY Compass	WV - Variety	WNR - New Republic
DP - NY Post	WCD - Critical Digest	WNS - Newsweek
DJ - NY Journal American	WGN - George Jean Nathan	WNY - New Yorker
DW - NY World Tele-Sun	WWM - Ward Morehouse	WSR - Saturday Review
DB - Brooklyn Eagle	BC - WCBS Leonard	WT - Time
DL - L.I.Press	BL - New Leader, WEVD	MP - Park East

Shows are rated as to how the critics liked them not if they think they will be hits. Pro means the critic stated directly that he recommends show for an entertaining or stimulating evening.

BEATRICE LILLIE-10/2/52	PROS: 100% RAVE NOTICES
BERNARDINE-10/16/52	PROS: 13 CON: DP DB DWD DJC DWJ WB WV
	NONE: DL WWM BL WCM WC WN WNR MP WSR WGN
THE FOUR POSTER-10/24/51	PROS: 19 CON: DH DP WGM WWM BL WC WNY
	NONE: DWJ WN WNR WSR
GUYS AND DOLLS-11/24/50	PROS: 29 CON: WN
THE KING AND I-3/29/51	PROS: 29 CON: WN
IN ANY LANGUAGE-10/8/52	PROS: DJ DB WNS WB DWW BC
	CON: 16 NONE: DL WGN BL WCM WSR MP WN WC
THE MALE ANIMAL-4/30/52	PROS: 27 NONE: WGN WNR MP
THE MILLIONAIRESS-10/17/52	PROS: DN DM DP DB DWD DWJ WB
	CON: DT DH DW DJ DJC BL WV WNS WT WNY
THE MOON IS BLUE-3/8/51	PROS: 26 CON: WC WGN NONE: WN MP
MRS. McTHING-2/20/52	PROS: 24 CON: DM DJ BC BL WT WGN
MY DARLIN' AIDA-10/27/52	PROS: DH DN DC DP DW DP DB DJC DWS DWW
	CON: DT DM DJ
PAL JOEY-1/3/52	PROS: 28 CON: BL NONE: WNR
NEW FACES OF 1952-5/16/52	PROS: 25 CON: DP WT WGN NONE: WN WNR
MR. PICKWICK-9/17/52	PROS: 18 CON: DT DP DM DW WWM WV BL WSR WNR
	NONE: WC WN MP
POINT OF NO RETURN-12/31/52	PROS: 25 CON: DW BL WN WNR WT
SOUTH PACIFIC-4/7/49	PROS: 29 CON: WT
TIME OF THE CUCKOO-10/15/52	PROS: 15 CON: DH DM DP DW BL WT
	NONE: WCD WGN WWM WCM WC WNR WN WSR MP
WISH YOU WERE HERE-6/25/52	PRO: DN DC DB DL DJC WV BL
	CON: 16 NONE: DWW WCD WGN WCM WNR MP

' VAUDEVILLE '

Five new acts on Palace program include: Lee Davis, Chris Gros, Bernadette Phelan Dancers, the Dyerettes, Pearce Knox and Elisa Jayne...New Radio City Music Hall program includes modern ballet spectacle to Chopin music, Latin American dances, Ramirez Peralta, Robert Marshall, Jay Marshall and Renald and Rudy...Johnny Ray and Ray Anthony's orchestra will hold opening vaudeville show at Capitol during Christmas week...Art Mooney signed for Paramount November 19...Roxy may concentrate on ice shows only...Current Roxy show starring Johnny Johnston and Jerry Colonna drew mild trade press notices, Variety & Billboard men both thinking Colonna failed to click...Duke Ellington show at Paramount recommended as outstanding, tasty entertainment by both trade journals.

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' Green Room Department '
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AUTHOR VS CRITICS...First playwright to take advantage of free white space in Compass to answer NYC reviewers charged critics with having the occupational hazard of a "god complex." Edmund Beloin, co-author of In Any Language defined term as meaning those who think of themselves beyond human frailties and prejudices who sometimes confuse opinion with truth. Word of mouth advertising is just as important to a play's success as kind words from critics, author pointed out.

COLUMN TIPS...Broadway producer casting new play from actors who will invest in it, hears Sobol...Ticket scalpers charging up to \$50 a pair for tickets to An Evening with Beatrice Lillie, reports Kilgallen...Katharine Hepburn in The Millionaire is a modern Maude Adams, praises Durling...Those cars parked in Shubert Alley belong to Hepburn and Lillie, Chapman discovered.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS...If Bernardine appeals to eternal spirit of youth in mankind, as his colleagues believe, Watts, Post, confesses wistfully that maybe he never was young. Forty million dollar NYC Coliseum would be perfect for summer operetta, reports Variety...New Republic dropped from NYC Critics' Circle, Bentley, New Republic, understands because it is now considered a Washington, D.C. publication.

MAIL BOX...Early curtains on road would enable salesmen and travelers to spend their time profitably before taking a late train to their next stop, Ned Alvord writes Variety...Eleven year old reader panned Chapman, News, review of The Mikado. Youngster thought review "smells and I think you are a scurpuss"...Bad plays, worse economics are main faults with current theater, J.S.Seidman, explained to Variety.

INTERVIEW HI-LITES...Dino Diluca, The Time of the Cuckoo, learned English for his current role, he told Fields, Mirror...Dorothy Sarnoff, My Darlin' Aida, sings her first Broadway role as an American girl, Hawkins, WT&S, points out...Porgy and Bess production in Europe nullifies the Russian propaganda line that Negroes in America have no chance in the arts, Robert Schnitzer explained to Sylvester, News. NYC critics are charming people to Gloria Marlowe, In Any Language, she told Morehouse, WT&S.

DERWENT DINNER...Three hundred attended testimonial dinner for Clarence Derwent given by Greater NY Chapter of ANTA at the Waldorf Astoria. Chapman, News, was master of ceremonies. Other speakers include Lawrence Langer, Vinton Freedley, Gilbert Miller and Frederick O'Neal. Derwent picked as his most treasured notice a review of Gypsy Love by Chapman.

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' THEATRE NEWS ROUND-UP '
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Shows that closed include The Gambler, The Sacred Flame and Frankie and Johnny... Mr. Pickwick is giving Sunday night performances...Players Club honored Walter Hampden with "Pipe Night" on his 25th year as club's president...League of NY Theatres urging 7:00 PM curtain test on road... "Theatrical press agents" will be featured in new WEVD program Sunday nights in a telephone quiz. They will attempt to answer questions about performers, authors, directors and traditions of theatres in which their shows are now housed...Elaine Dunn takes over as lead dancer in 2 important numbers in Pal Joey... The Suspects scheduled for Nov 12 will be in NYC later in month...Mr. Pickwick has posted closing notice for Nov 8... "Show Business" will sponsor annual production series by NY drama schools...Albert Marre, former Brattle Theatre, Mass, director, named associate director of NYC City Center.

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' RANDOM DRAMA NOTES '
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FILM NOTES...Moira Shearer will have lead in MGM's Brigadoon...Sylvester, News, finished screenplay for "Joe Louis Story"...Josh Logan completed film script of Mr. Roberts...Pat Crowley signed as lead in Paramount's "Reaching for the Stars"...Paula Stone and Michael Sloane may produce film version of Top Banana themselves...Screen rights to Gertrude Lawrence autobiography "A Star Danced" deferred...Michael Todd and Edward Small will produce a major "spectacle" film per year for United Artists.

RECORD NOTES...Columbia to issue LP of "Dancers of Bali and the Gamelan Orchestra" Old Vic signed contract with RCA for Shakespeare series...Columbia issuing "Brigadoon Song Hits" album with Lee Sullivan and Sally Sweetland...RCA will make original cast album of Hazel Flagg and Two's Company...Presser Music has published score of 65th annual Mask and Wig Club, University of Penn, show "Here's Howe," which is a revival of the 1923 show...New Faces album by RCA recommended by Simon, SRL, while Wish You Were Here RCA album okayed for only those who saw the show and its swimming pool...Don Juan in Hell Columbia album drew rave from Bron, Variety and Briggs, Times.

BOOK NOTES...John van Druten's "Playwright at Work" due in January from Harper's... "To the Actor" by Michael Chekhov, which Harper's will publish, has foreword by Yul Brynner...George Jean Nathan will skip his Knopf annual this season...Viking publishes Arthur Miller's "Those Familiar Spirits"...Simon and Schuster will bring out biography of Gertrude Lawrence...Dodd Mead to publish Shaw anthology of his prose works...Sam Friedman, press agent, to do autobiography "Press Agents are Nicer than People"...Winston one volume Shakespeare has "important" quotations printed in red...Macmillan publishing Alfred Harbage's "Shakespeare and the Rival Tradition."

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' Digest of Current Reviews '
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Frankie and Johnny-Theatre de Lys, 10/28/52. Withdrawn after the first performance William de Lys first subscription play for his refurbished Greenwich Village theatre, an American folk legend by John Huston, was brutally panned by daily appraisers. All commented on comfortable seats, beautiful stage and theatre outfitted at reported cost of \$150,000; but there was a complete dearth of kind words for script and players. Times man tabbed it elaborately and studiously boring in series of sophomoric improvisations. Kerr, Herald Tribune, feared it was story of sad decay of an honorable barroom ballad. He is still wondering what made the six man orchestra laugh so hard. Coleman, Mirror, regrets group put such a shoddy first foot forward. Chapman, News, enjoyed jass ballet dances by Vonn Hamilton with music by Irwin Baselon; but otherwise it was pretty hard to take. Watts, Post, doubts if free whiskey and a five course dinner would have made effort worth while to attend. Pretty monotonous summed up Hawkins, WT&S, Journal American critic settled for an "oops." De Lys plans to present his second subscription play Sodom Tennessee, by Howard Richardson and William Bernay, in late December.

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' LEGIT STUFF '
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Reed Allyn subbed for T.J. Halligan, Pal Joey, when latter's toe was infected... The Fig Tree closed in Chicago and will not be brought to N.Y. as planned...Ward Morehouse, WT&S, discharged from hospital and back at work...Thomas Radcliffe, Seacliff, LI, summer theatre producer, opened lecture tour in Baltimore...Arthur Schwartz, composer, took Herald Tribune public notice explaining he wasn't the Schwartz running for Supreme Court, but that friends should vote for latter anyway...Two's Company gave midnight Monday performance in Detroit to take care of patrons who missed show when Bette Davis was ill...Greek ship owners of N.Y. providing air transportation for National Theatre of Greece company...Clifford Sage, Dallas Times Herald, visited N.Y. shows.

